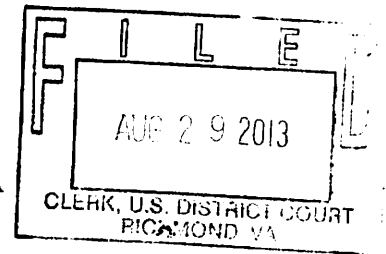


**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA  
Richmond Division**



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA )

**V.**

SANTRA LAVONNE RUCKER, )

Petitioner. )

Criminal Action No. 3:98CR101-HEH

Civil Action No. 3:13CV161-HEH

**MEMORANDUM OPINION**  
**(Dismissing Successive 28 U.S.C. § 2255 Motion)**

By Memorandum Opinion and Order entered on April 5, 2010, the Court denied a 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion filed by Petitioner (ECF Nos. 410, 411). On March 13, 2013, the Court received from Petitioner a document titled, “*Habeas Corpus Under the War Powers Act of 1933 to the President of the United States*” (“Habeas Corpus” (ECF No. 455)). The Habeas Corpus is a successive, unauthorized 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion.

The Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996 restricted the jurisdiction of the district courts to hear second or successive applications for federal habeas corpus relief by prisoners attacking the validity of their convictions and sentences by establishing a “gatekeeping mechanism.” *Felker v. Turpin*, 518 U.S. 651, 657 (1996) (internal quotation marks omitted). Specifically, “[b]efore a second or successive application permitted by this section is filed in the district court, the applicant shall move in the appropriate court of appeals for an order authorizing the district court to consider the application.” 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)(A).

The United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has held that inmates may not avoid the bar on successive collateral attacks on their convictions and sentences by inventive labeling. *See United States v. Winestock*, 340 F.3d 200, 206 (4th Cir. 2003). “Call it a motion for a new trial, arrest of judgment, mandamus, prohibition, coram nobis, coram vobis, audit querela, certiorari, capias, habeas corpus . . .; the name makes no difference. It is substance that controls.” *Melton v. United States*, 359 F.3d 855, 857 (7th Cir. 2004) (citing *Thurman v. Gramley*, 97 F.3d 185, 186–87 (7th Cir. 1996)). Thus, “[a]ny motion filed in the district court that imposed the sentence, and substantively within the scope of § 2255[(a)], is a motion under § 2255, no matter what title the prisoner plasters on the cover.” *Id.* (citing *Ramunno v. United States*, 264 F.3d 723 (7th Cir. 2001)).


The Habeas Corpus continues to challenge Petitioner’s underlying conviction by arguing that this Court lacked jurisdiction and, thus, falls squarely within the ambit of 28 U.S.C. § 2255(a). Therefore, the Habeas Corpus (ECF No. 455) must be treated as a successive § 2255 motion. *See id.* Because the Court has not received authorization from the Fourth Circuit to file the motion, the action will be dismissed for want of jurisdiction.

An appeal may not be taken from the final order in a § 2255 proceeding unless a judge issues a certificate of appealability (“COA”). 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(1)(B). A COA will not issue unless a prisoner makes “a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right.” 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2). This requirement is satisfied only when “reasonable jurists could debate whether (or, for that matter, agree that) the petition

should have been resolved in a different manner or that the issues presented were ‘adequate to deserve encouragement to proceed further.’” *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000) (quoting *Barefoot v. Estelle*, 463 U.S. 880, 893 & n.4 (1983)). Because Petitioner fails to satisfy this standard, a certificate of appealability will be denied.

An appropriate Final Order will accompany this Memorandum Opinion.

Date: Aug. 28, 2013  
Richmond, Virginia

 /s/  
HENRY E. HUDSON  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE